

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3635

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SP
SUBJECT: VISIT TO MADRID MAY 11-12

1. YOUR VISIT TO SPAIN WILL BE THE FIRST BY A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND WILL BE THE OCCASION FOR THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING OF THE US-SPANISH COUNCIL AT ITS SEAT IN MADRID. (AS YOU KNOW, WE AGREED IN THE TREATY THAT THE COUNCIL WILL MEET AT LEAST SEMI-ANNUALLY.) IN THE GOS THERE IS GREAT INTEREST IN YOUR VISIT, FOLLOWING AS IT DOES THE SUMMIT AND NAC MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN LONDON.

2. THERE IS A STRONG DESIRE ON THE PART OF SPANISH LEADERS, BOTH WITH RESPECT TO YOUR VISIT AND THAT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT THE FOLLOWING WEEK, TO RECIPROCATATE FOR THE WARM RECEPTION PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WAS GIVEN IN WASHINGTON.

3. THE VISIT PROVIDES A USEFUL OPPORQUNITY AS WELL TO UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREATY RELATIONSHIP AND TO DEMONSTRATE OUR STRONG DESIRE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH A DEMOCRATIC SPAIN.

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4. WITH RESPECT TO THE TREATY WHICH HAS CREATED THE OCCASION FOR THIS VISIT, THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IN SPAIN REMAINS QUITE POSITIVE, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY THE POTENTIAL A FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE HERE HAS FOR CREATING IRRITATIONS MAY COME MORE TO THE SURFACE AT SOME POINT AFTER A NEW PARLIAMENT IS INSTALLED. WE DO NOT EXPECT OREJA TO FOCUS ON THIS OCCASION ON ANY SPECIFIC

ISSUES HAVING TO DO WITH THE PRESENCE OF THE U.S. FORCES IN SPAIN.

5. THE MAIN FOCUS HERE IS RATHER ON THE FACT OF HOLDING THE MEETING ITSELF, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TREATY, AND DOING IT AT THE SEAT OF THE COUNCIL IN MADRID. THIS SERVES THE SPANISH GOVT INTEREST IN DEMONSTRATING THAT SPAIN IS PLAYING A MORE EQUAL ROLE IN THIS NEW TREATY RELATIONSHIP. THE VISIT IS INEVITABLY ALSO CONSIDERED SOMETHING OF A PLUS FOR SUAREZ' OWN PERSONAL POLITICAL INTERESTS AT THIS MOMENT. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THIS SEEMS MANAGEABLE IN THAT THE SPECIFIC TREATY-RELATED PURPOSE OF THIS VISIT IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD AND IN THAT YOUR VISIT WILL OCCUR AT A TIME OF CONSIDERABLE DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN SPAIN BY EUROPEAN LEADERS.

6 THE SPANISH POSITION ON NATO WAS DESCRIBED DURING SUAREZ' VISIT TO WASHINGTON. SUAREZ, WHILE FAVORING SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO, HAS POSTPONED COMING TO GRIPS WITH THIS UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE YET HAS IN MIND WHEN IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE TO ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH IT. HE WILL HAVE A CONSIDERABLE TASK IN BRINGING THE SPANISH MILITARY LEADERSHIP AROUND, AS WELL AS SOME ELEMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION. THUS, THE QUESTION REMAINS WHERE IT WAS LEFT IN WASHINGTON.

7. ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SIDE THE SITUATION HAS EVOLVED FUNDAMENTALLY THE WAY SUAREZ SAID IT WOULD WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT A BIT OF STRAIN. HIS FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT, UPON
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HIS RETURN, THAT HE WOULD STAND FOR ELECTION TO THE MORE IMPORTANT LOWER HOUSE IN THE JUNE 15 ELECTIONS GAVE FINAL SHAPE TO THE ELECTORAL CONTEST.

8. SUAREZ RUNS AS AN "INDEPENDENT" AT THE HEAD OF THE MADRID LIST OF THE UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (CENTRO DEMOCRATICO), A NON-IDEOLOGICAL FORMATION OF CENTER-RIGHT PERSUASION UNITED BY GENUINE FEAR THAT THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID POLARIZATION IS THROUGH A CENTER VICTORY AND A DESIRE TO RIDE SUAREZ'S COATTAILS. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE IT WILL WIN A PLURALITY, PERHAPS NEAR 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, GIVING IT A SLIGHTLY LARGER SHAPE OF THE SEATS UNDER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

9. MANY VOTERS ARE STILL UNDECIDED, POLL DATA UNRELIABLE AND THE CONTEST JUST GETTING UNDER WAY. BUT DESPITE THE PLETHIRA OF SPLINTER AND REGIONAL GROUPS, ONLY FOUR OTHER NATIONAL POLITICAL LISTS

APPERA SIGNIFICANT. THEY ARE, IN THE CURRENT
ESTIMATE OF THE ORDER OF FINISH AND ROUGH GUESSES
AT VOTE RANGE:

-- THE FRAGA-LED ALIANZA POPULAR, THE CONSERVATIVE
(NEO-FRANCOIST) OPPOSITION TO SUAREZ (15-24PERCENT).
-- THE MAJOR SOCIALIST PARTY, THE PSOE OF FELIPE
GONZALEZ, RECOGNIZED AND SUPPORTED BY THE WESTERN
EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (15-21PERCENT).
--THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM" LED BY
JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ (8 TO 14PERCENT).
--THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY, LED BY SANTIAGO
CARRILLO, A EUROCOMMUNIST SPOKESMAN, WHOSE POLITICAL
FORTUNES ARE SHADOWED BY ACCUSATIONS OF INVOLVEMENT
IN A CIVIL WAR MASSACRE (5-10PERCENT).

10. THE EXPECTED CLEAR PLURALITY FOR SUAREZ'S
GROUP WOULD FORECLOSE ANY REAL CHALLENGE TO HIS
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HOLD ON THE PRIME MINISTRY, BUT HE WILL HAVE TO
LOOK FOR HELP, PRINCIPALLY FROM THE CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS AND FROM ALIANZA POPULAR DEFECTORS (AND,
ON GIVEN ISSUES, EVEN THE SOCIALISTS) TO PUT
THROUGH A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. THE PRINCIPAL
TASKS OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT (CORTEX) WILL BE TO
WRITE A NEW CONSTITUTION TO REPLACE THE FRANCO-ERA
ONE AND TO DEAL WITH SPAIN'S ECONOMIC ILLS. STABLER

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